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4 THINGS TO KNOW

Explainer: The case for Trump's impeachment - and the case against it

U.S. President Donald Trump boards Air Force One at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland on December 14, 2019. REUTERS

1

Either way, Trump is likely to be acquitted.

The Democratic-controlled U.S. House of Representatives could vote as soon as Wednesday to formally charge President Donald Trump, a Republican, with "high crimes and misdemeanors," making him only the third U.S. president in history to be impeached.

That sets up a trial in January in the Republican-run Senate, where he is expected to be acquitted.

In their articles of impeachment, Democrats charge that Trump abused his power as president by pressuring a foreign government, Ukraine's, to help him win re-election. They accuse the president of endangering the U.S. Constitution, jeopardizing national security and undermining the integrity of the 2020 election.

At the heart of their impeachment case is testimony by current and former officials alleging an extraordinary effort that went outside official channels to pressure Ukraine to announce a corruption investigation into former Democratic Vice President Joe Biden, a potential political rival in 2020.

The allegations by Trump allies against Biden – that he used his position as vice president to force the removal of a Ukrainian prosecutor to stop an investigation of an energy company on which his son Hunter Biden was a director - have been discredited. Neither Trump nor his allies have provided evidence to support them and Biden has denied them.

Trump pressed Ukraine's new president, Volodymyr Zelensky, in a July 25 phone call to work with his attorney general, William Barr, and his personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, to investigate the Bidens and also a debunked theory that Ukraine, not Russia, interfered in the 2016 election.

Democrats allege that the evidence they have gathered in their inquiry shows Trump withheld a high-profile White House meeting and nearly $400 million in security aid to pressure Zelensky to announce the investigations. Trump ultimately released the money after news of the delay became public, although the White House meeting has yet to take place.

Democrats also charge Trump with obstructing Congress by preventing members of his administration from cooperating with the probe, in defiance of the Constitution.

"If the president can first abuse his power and then stonewall all congressional requests for information, Congress cannot fulfill its duty to act as a check and balance against the executive - and the president becomes a dictator," House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler said last Wednesday.

The Democrats' case rests in large part on a rough transcript of the July 25 call, in which Trump asks Zelensky to "do us a favor" and work with Barr and Giuliani in carrying out the investigations he sought. Current and former U.S. officials testified that Trump directed them to work with Giuliani on Ukraine issues, despite the fact that the former New York mayor was a private citizen.

U.S. Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland provided some of the most damaging testimony. He said he spoke directly with Trump about the effort to pressure Ukraine and said other top administration officials were involved. He testified that Ukrainian officials understood they would have to announce the investigations in order to get the withheld security aid.

Trump says he has done nothing wrong, and his Republican allies in Congress agree with him. None are expected to vote to impeach him this week.

"You can't make your case against the president because nothing happened," Representative Doug Collins, the top Republican on the House Judiciary Committee, said last week.

> **"You can't make your case against the president because nothing happened."**
>
> **Representative Doug Collins**

Republicans have coalesced around the argument that the Democrats' case amounts to hearsay because it mostly relies on the testimony of officials who did not deal directly with Trump. (Democrats say Trump's refusal to cooperate has prevented them from getting the testimony of other officials directly involved in the matter - a central pillar of their obstruction of Congress charge.)

Republicans say no actual exchange of favors took place, because Zelensky ultimately did get the delayed aid and the meeting with Trump that he sought - albeit on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly - even though the Ukrainian president did not agree to the investigations that Trump wanted.

They argue that Democrats are subverting the will of voters who elected Trump president in 2016 simply because they do not like his policies. REUTERS

2 Vaping increases the risk of lung disease by a third

Using e-cigarettes significantly increases the risk of developing chronic lung conditions such as asthma or emphysema, U.S. researchers said on Monday. The study, published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, is among the first to show the potential long-term harms of using e-cigarettes, which are often promoted as a safer alternative to tobacco and a means of helping smokers quit. It found that e-cigarettes increased the risk of lung disease by a third compared with those who never smoked or vaped. And the risk was even higher among adults who used both e-cigarettes and smoked tobacco. "E-cigarettes are promoted as harmless and they're not," Stanton Glantz, director of the University of California San Francisco Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education, said. REUTERS

3 Investigation of Canadian billionaire couple's death

The investigation into the deaths of a Canadian pharmaceutical billionaire couple by a private detective hired by the victims' family has been completed, the chief homicide investigator of the Toronto police and the family said in a joint statement on Monday without revealing any of its findings. Police reiterated on Monday that they are treating the case of Barry and Honey Sherman as a targeted double murder, Detective Sergeant Hank Idsinga told reporters. He called on the public to come forward with tips as the investigation headed by police continues. Sherman was 75 and his wife, 70 at the time of their deaths, which stunned the worlds of business, politics and philanthropy, and drew public condolences from prominent figures including Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. REUTERS

4 U.S. government extends Obamacare sign-up

The U.S. government said on Monday the deadline for signing-up for 2020 insurance plans under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been extended by three days to Dec. 18 to accommodate those who experienced issues while attempting to enroll. There were website glitches and call center delays reported on Sunday, the earlier deadline for the 2020 open enrollment, and the extension should help the final enrollment tally, said Evercore ISI analyst Michael Newshel. "The post-Thanksgiving ramp-up in sign-ups was better than expected, and the momentum bodes well for the key final surge into the deadline this Sunday, December 15," Newshel said in a note last week. Last year, the number of people who signed up for 2019 health plans fell 4% to 8.5 million people from 2018. REUTERS

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The MTA says more people are likely riding the subway these days because service is improving. Would you agree? GETTY IMAGES

MTA data reveals shorter subway trips

Commuters have one less excuse for being late to work.

MORGAN ROUSSEAU
morgan@metro.us

New Yorkers who have noticed their subway commute isn't quite as painstaking as it used to be aren't imagining things, as new data shows trains are getting through the system more quickly.

The MTA on Monday released new "running time" statistics showing the time it takes for trains to travel between terminals has improved on every line from November 2018 to November 2019, with a weekday on-time performance this past November of 81.8 percent, up 17 percent from the previous year. MTA officials said in a press release that it was the sixth straight month that they saw on-time performance of over 80 percent. The last time this happened was in 2013, according to the MTA.

This improvement, which the MTA attributed to the success of the Subway Action Plan and the Save Safe Seconds campaign, comes as the transit agency reports an upswing in subway ridership.

Officials believe the recent trend in on-time performance is attracting riders back to the subway system. October 2019 – the most recent month with confirmed data – had six days with more than 6 million customers on the subway, the first time that has happened since December 2016.

"The data doesn't lie: subway service is demonstrably better, more customers are taking the subways, and the service continues to improve each month thanks to the hard work of our employees and smarter operations," said MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye in a press release.

The MTA referred to the new "running time" metric as the time it takes for trains to travel from terminal to terminal, and said it's using new technology to better track where trains are in large parts of the subway system.

Travelers using the 7 and 7 express lines are in luck, as that's where the agency reported the biggest improvement of any line in 2019. Running times were, respectively, 9.2 percent (3.5 minutes) and 10.5 percent (more than 4.5 minutes) faster last month than in November 2018.

Breaking down subway speeds

Overall, the numbered lines (1,2,3,4,5,6 & 7 trains) are running close to 4 percent, or about 2.5 minutes, faster than last year, and close to 6 percent, or about 3.5 minutes, faster than in 2017.

On lettered lines, trains are running about 2 percent, or about 1.5 minutes, faster than 2018, and close to 3 percent, or about 2 minutes, faster than in 2017.

Major incidents down

In addition to quicker trips, straphangers may have noticed less delays due to problems in the system. The MTA reported weekday major incidents, which include disruptions like track fires, decreased by nearly half — 49.3 percent — from November 2018, dropping from 67 incidents to 34 incidents in November 2019. Furthermore, weekday train delays decreased 42.5 percent from last November, from 51,964 to 29,863.

> **"The data doesn't lie: subway service is demonstrably better, more customers are taking the subways, and the service continues to improve each month thanks to the hard work of our employees and smarter operations."**
>
> MTA Chairman and CEO Patrick J. Foye

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14th Street busway gets city's first all-electric bus fleet as its ridership soars

NYC reduces its carbon footprint.

DEVIN GANNON
6SQFT
letters@metro.us

The first of the city's new electric buses hit the streets on Sunday, as the Metropolitan Transportation Authority moves to fully electrify their fleet by 2040. Fifteen new electric articulated buses will run on the M14 Select Bus Service route on the 14th Street busway, a car-free strip between Third and Ninth Avenues introduced by the city in October as a way to speed up commutes. The busway has proven popular with riders, with new data showing a significant increase of M14 SBS ridership compared to last year.

The new buses join the MTA's current fleet of 10 electric standard buses the agency leases for a three-year pilot program. The 15 buses, all scheduled to be deployed by next March, are expected to serve more than 30,000-weekday customers via the M14 SBS route.

The MTA said it will spend $1.1 billion as part of the 2020-2024 capital plan to buy 500 electric buses and expects to buy electric-only vehicles by 2029. The goal, as set by the agency's Fast Forward plan, is to have a fully electric fleet of buses by 2040.

According to the MTA, the all-electric fleet reduces the city's carbon footprint, while the propulsion technology makes them run quieter. Craig Cipriano, the acting president of MTA Bus Company and senior vice president of the agency's Department of Buses, said the new fleet "represents the future of MTA bus service."

"This is a historic day for MTA buses and the start of our journey to a zero-emissions fleet that will set the standard for the rest of the nation as its largest public bus system."

The new fleet comes as commuters continue to choose the bus over the subway, even during times of day when the L train is running at its peak frequency, according to the agency. Data released on Sunday shows an increase of bus riders between 2018 and 2019 during weekday peak hours and on the weekends.

PHOTO BY MARC A. HERMANN FOR MTA NYC TRANSIT

$1.1B

The MTA said it will spend $1.1 billion as part of the 2020-2024 capital plan to buy 500 electric buses and expects to buy electric-only vehicles by 2029.

As Streetsblog reported on Sunday, ridership increased by 24 percent in November, the first month of the busway, compared to the same month in 2018. Morning rush hour ridership has also increased by about 20 percent following the introduction of the busway this year.

"We are committed to a state-of-the-art bus fleet across the entire city that is green and sustainable, and that means moving toward all-electric technology," NYC Transit President Andy Byford said in a press release. "We're also thrilled about the popularity of the M14 and the busway that's helping to enable its success."

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A new lactation room has opened at Grand Central Terminal. ISTOCK

Moms can now use a private breastfeeding room in Grand Central

Nursing mothers have access to a new lactation room near Track 36.

MORGAN ROUSSEAU
morgan@metro.us

Mothers seeking a private place to breastfeed or pump can now duck into a new lactation room at Grand Central Terminal.

MTA's Metro-North Railroad has partnered with Mommy Poppins, an online resource for families, to bring the private room to the busy transportation hub. The cloistered space is located at Track 36 near Starbucks.

Though public breastfeeding is perfectly legal and protected by both federal and state law, many women often face unwarranted pushback or leering from bystanders, or are unable to find a comfortable and convenient location to nurse while out and about in the city.

The MTA said Monday that the lactation room is available for use seven days a week whenever Grand Central Terminal is open to the public. Women can request access to the room at the Station Master's office, located on the west side of the main concourse, behind the stairs to the Vanderbilt Avenue entrance and near Track 37. Officials said the enclosed lactation room is ADA accessible and is complete with climate control, an easy chair, a table, an electrical outlet for plugging in a breast pump and a door that can be locked for privacy. The room has a phone with a direct ring to the Station Master's Office for emergencies, and as an added security measure, security cameras monitor its outside entrance.

"The new lactation room will help customers better navigate our transportation network, and I'm proud that Metro-North is supporting women on their journey as new moms," said Catherine Rinaldi, President of Metro-North Railroad.

Knife-wielding intruder caught creeping around on camera

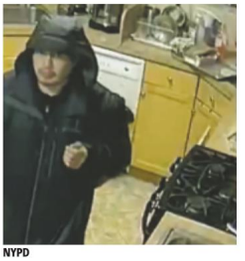
Investigators are looking for a man who was caught on camera creepily skulking around a home while holding a knife as the 65-year-old homeowner slept.

ABC reports the incident occurred at Fort Hamilton Parkway and 54th St. in Borough Park around 1 a.m. Saturday.

NYPD's Twitter account shared footage of the creepy scene and tweeted, "WANTED for a Burglary in the vicinity of Ft. Hamilton Parkway and 54th St. on 12/14/19 at 1:00 a.m. #Brooklyn @ NYPD66PCT Reward up to $2500 Seen him? Know who he is? Call 1-800-577-TIPS or DM us! Calls are CONFIDENTIAL!"

Cops told CBS the man entered through an unlocked backdoor. The homeowner said he heard a noise and slammed his bedroom door. The sound apparently scared the suspect, who fled the scene.

If you or anyone you know has any information about this intruder, you are asked to contact NYPD Crime Stoppers at 1-800-577-TIPS (8477) or for Spanish, 1-888-57-PISTA (74782). You can also submit tips via Twitter, or you can send tips on the Crime Stoppers website.



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FDNY dad confronts suspect who allegedly terrorized his daughter

"I will get justice," father and firefighter Omar Wilks proclaimed.

BECCA GLASSER-BAKER
Rebecca.Glasser@metro.us

Police are offering a $2,500 reward for information about this man. PHOTO VIA NYPD CRIME STOPPERS

An FDNY firefighter whose daughter was chased into the street by a stranger and then struck with a car confronted the alleged attacker in a Queens courtroom Monday.

The New York Post reports that the father yelled, "I want justice" at the alleged suspect. The father, identified as Omar Wilks, also reportedly told the suspect, "Hey Kevin, that was my 14-year-old child you attacked!"

The suspect is Kevin Ramtahal, 23, and was in Queens Criminal Court Monday morning after police tracked him down in connection to the disturbing Dec. 6 incident. Ramtahal has been accused of chasing Wilks' daughter, Amara, into traffic as she was walking to school. The suspect allegedly threatened the girl by saying, "I'm coming for you."

Amara suffered injuries to her legs when she was hit by a car.

Her dad, a firefighter with Engine 294 in Queens, responded to the scene and was horrified to learn that his daughter was the victim.

"'Daddy, am I going to die?' That's what my daughter asked me," Wilks told Ramtahal in court. "Remember those words."

The New York Post reports that Ramtahal stopped in his tracks in court and faced Wilks. He allegedly stared at the father with wide eyes. Wilks was escorted out of the courtroom by two officers who reportedly told him that they "understand."

After the Dec. 6 incident, an anonymous Facebook tip led NYPD to Ramtahal's home.

Ramtahal was in court for a status hearing and is being held on $2,500 bail. He's facing multiple charges, which include endangering the welfare of a child and reckless endangerment. But Wilks wants the charges to be upgraded, since new bail reform guidelines will be hitting New York City on Jan. 1.

Wilks told the New York Post, "There is no reason he should be on the street on January 1 after attacking a little girl."

Later on, Wilks added, "I felt like leaping over the table and grabbing him up as a father, but out of respect for the court, I maintained discipline and made it clear to him that I am determined to get justice."

Harvey Weinstein claims he broke the glass ceiling before anyone else

Harvey Weinstein GETTY IMAGES

Despite being accused of sexually assaulting or sexually harassing over 80 women, Harvey Weinstein says he helped paved the way for female filmmakers.

Weinstein spoke with The New York Post and proclaimed he feels like a forgotten man.

The alleged rapist bragged to The Post, "I made more movies directed by women and about women than any filmmaker, and I'm talking about 30 years ago. I'm not talking about now when it's vogue. I did it first! I pioneered it!"

He added, "It all got eviscerated because of what happened."

Weinstein complained that, "My work has been forgotten."

The Post is the first outlet to interview him in over year; it was reportedly to prove he has not been exaggerating about his recent car crash ailments, sustained in an Aug. 17 car accident. The Post spoke to him as he was recovering from a three-hour spinal surgery to remove three bone plates that are compressing his vertebrae.

Weinstein did the interview because he wanted to dispel the myths that it was minor operation after he was seen heavily relying on a walker at a court appearance last week.

During the interview, he refused to discuss the allegations against him, including rape, predatory sexual assault and criminal sex act. His trial is set for Jan. 6 in Manhattan Supreme Court. BECCA GLASSER-BAKER

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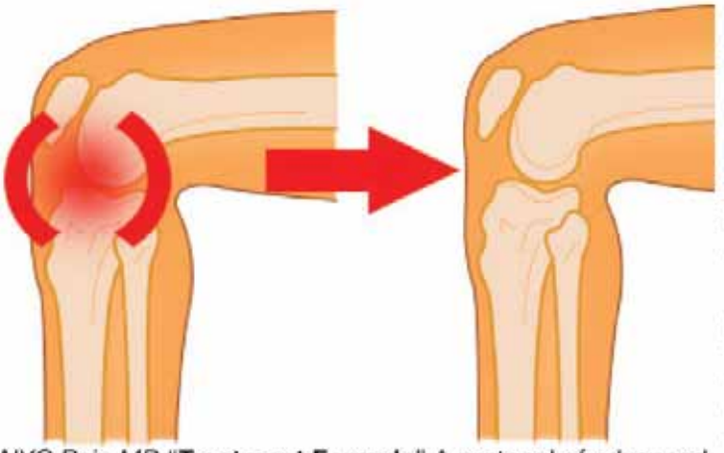

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Adam Carolla's take on Trump: "I'm not triggered by him."

'No Safe Spaces' for Adam Carolla

Podcaster Adam Carolla, a conservative, talks to Metro about his newsy documentary on cancel culture and free speech.

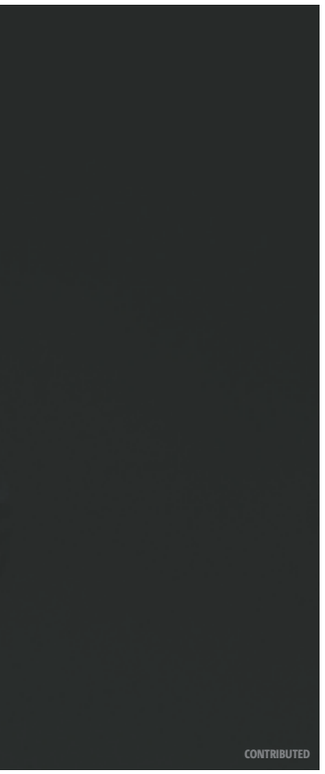
A.D. AMOROSI
letters@metro.us

Every day, we hear about attacks on free speech and free thought.

That these assaults come in the guise of liberals silencing conservatives – not allowing conservative speakers, professors or comedians at universities, shouting down those whose voices don't match their own in the name of trigger warnings, safe spaces or cancel culture — is against the tenants of the First Amendment stating that freedoms of religion, speech and the press are among Americans' most prominent rights.

To this end, America's most downloaded podcaster-comedian Adam Carolla and radio talk show host-author Dennis Prager — conservatives, both — filmed their "No Safe Spaces" documentary over the course of two years with director Justin Folk, starting with conservative podcaster-writer Ben Shapiro's September 2017 speech at UC Berkeley, the birthplace of liberal campus activism in the '60s, and now the flashpoint for cancel culture at its most violent. By October 2019, "No Safe Spaces" was ready to screen and distribute, first at several theaters in Arizona, then slowly through the rest of the U.S. due to unwilling liberal screening rooms and anti-conservative distribution chains, until Dec. 6 when the documentary opened widely. Even this success came with its headaches, however, as, on Dec. 11, a group of masked men intimidated "No Safe Spaces" moviegoers at a La Habra, California theater.

"It's not a film that a lot of folks in the 'mainstream media' can embrace, because it kind of takes a poke at them," said Carolla of "No Safe Spaces" during a phone call with Metro. "It's saying that they're not doing their job. The film is considered 'conservative' even though it features a bunch of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liberal faces in it, all agreeing about the right to free speech. It's curious, though that it is controversial because we're talking about the right to free speech. That shows you the state we're in – that free speech is controversial."

For all of their popularity as podcasters and radio hosts, Prager and Carolla could have simply stayed in the cozy confines of their respective studios and opined, as opposed to going out and making a movie. So why do it?

"People ask me all the time why I did 'No Safe Spaces,' in the same way they ask me why I did 'Dancing with the Stars,' and my answer is usually 'yes,'" said Carolla over the phone. "I used to have a regular job – carpenter, truck driver, roofer – so that when people ask me if want to be part of a worthwhile project, I say 'yes.'"

In "No Safe Spaces," conservative-minded university professors, socio-political commentators (e.g. Ann Coulter) and television personalities (e.g. Tim Allen) are shown as being removed from successful jobs due to their beliefs, or silenced – even shouted down by student groups gone un-governed by anyone but their own youthful peers. Carolla and Prager watched that happen too often to their contemporaries to let that go unchecked. "All of these situations are bad, but, to me, the scary Orwellian part is when a comment is misinterpreted. There was a tennis announcer [Doug Adler] who was talking about Venus Williams, and said she was putting on 'guerilla tactics,' as in 'guerilla fighting,' 'guerilla warfare.' They took it as 'gorilla,' the animal, and he got fired. He said he used the phrase 'guerilla warfare,' all the time, but they said they didn't hear it that way, and now he doesn't have a job. That to me is really Orwellian and scary."

"People ask me all the time why I did 'No Safe Spaces,' in the same way they ask me why I did 'Dancing with the Stars,' and my answer is usually 'yes.' I used to have a regular job – carpenter, truck driver, roofer – so that when people ask me if want to be part of a worthwhile project, I say 'yes.'"

Adam Carolla

As a comedian who "faces backlash all the time," Carolla is undisturbed and unmoved by any potential hassle he has received for the due-diligence of "No Safe Spaces" and its take down of cancel culture and anti-free speech rhetoric. "I make jokes, speak my mind, and people get angry. That's my business. I responded to Greta Thunburg getting the Time Person of the Year thing. I tweeted that was great, and hopefully she'd grow up to marry Mark Ruffalo, gets pregnant and gives birth to a recycling bin. Everybody tweeted me back that I'm an assh-le, OK, that's my business to make people angry. It's supposed to be to make people laugh, but a percentage of them just get mad. That's what I signed up for."

Carolla quotes from "No Safe Spaces" when asked to state what audiences should get out of his documentary, beyond mere politics, by pointing to a conservative professor from Berkley who claimed that he disagreed with everything Ben Shapiro said during his talk ("which is stupid because Ben Shapiro says so many things that are patently obvious," said Carolla), but that Shapiro had the right to speak his mind, "and that he would defend his right to say it. That's corny, but that is the whole point of the the film."

For all of Carolla's conservative viewpoints put forth in "No Safe Spaces," not once does he or Prager mention the President – America's top conservative – by name. What's his take on Trump?

"I don't have the Trump derangement syndrome that a lot of people have," said Carolla. "I'm not triggered by Trump. I don't have that anger that people have toward him. I get that he comes across as a pompous ass on occasion. But, it mostly amuses me. I know a lot of people – including my dad – who are very angry with the guy. He doesn't bother me. If you are a narcissist, you get outraged. You can disagree with the guy all you like – but it's the narcissists that are triggered. I'm not. I like some of his policies, and disagree with a few other policies. Either way, I don't have the knee-jerk reactions to him that others do."

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9	2	7			4			6
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8			6			3	2	1
	3		9		1	7		

MEDIUM

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HARD

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READER WRITE-INS:

LOUSY WEATHER

This weather really has me down. Storm after storm along with the shorter days of light and below average temperatures. When will it end? By May I guess. Then we'll have to face a summer of stifling heat!

Carolyn, *Metro Philly reader*

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Aries Know what you want to do and what your responsibilities are. How you handle others will affect the amount of support and help you are offered.

Taurus Take care of details that can make or break plans for family fun. An enthusiastic attitude will encourage others to pitch in and help.

Gemini Stick to basics and tell the truth. If you aren't sure about something, sit tight. Emotions will escalate quickly if you let an outsider interfere in personal matters.

Cancer The race is on, and you appear to be in the lead. Don't hesitate or dither, when all that's required is to follow through with your plans until they are complete.

Leo Money issues should not be ignored. Don't feel that you must spend money to make someone love you. Use your charm, and everything else will fall into place.

Virgo Don't feel that you must agree or side with someone who is putting pressure on you. Have the courage to do what's best for yourself and your loved ones.

Libra A new look at an old concept will lead to a new beginning. Turn one of your ideas into a plan that is geared toward saving more and spending less.

Scorpio A change will be useful for you. Whether it's at home or at work, you'll discover that you can make extra cash doing something you enjoy. Participate and profit.

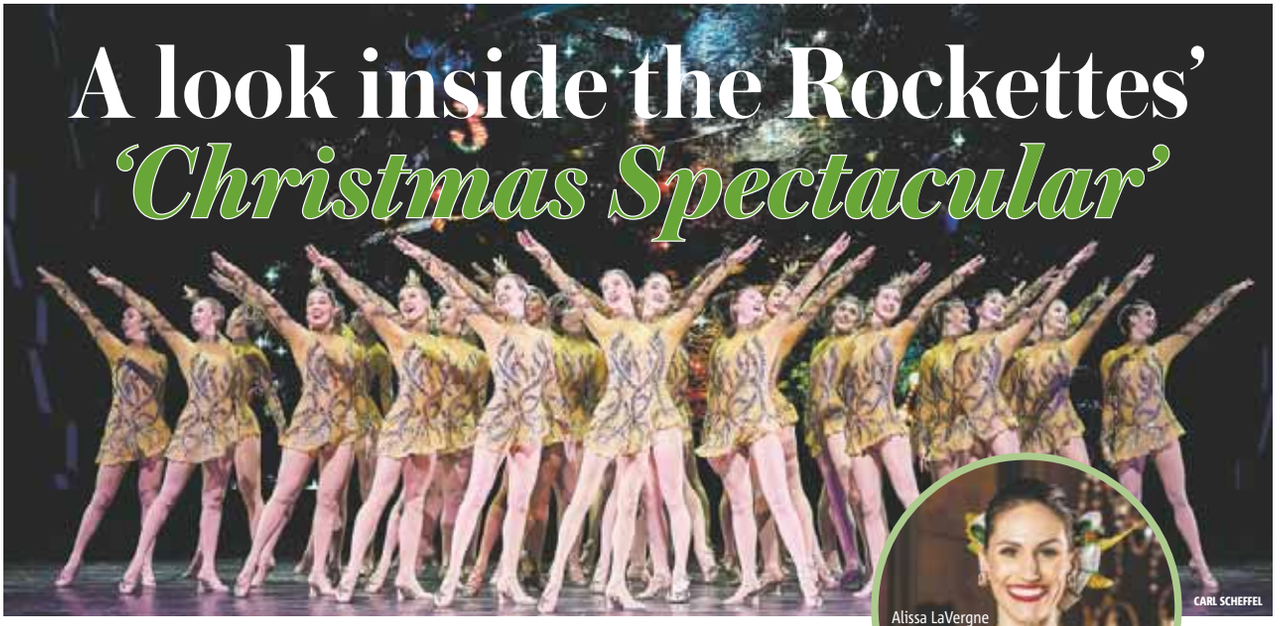
Sagittarius Listen carefully and consider the source of any information you are given. Get your home ready for the festive season and clear a space for a project you want to start.

Capricorn Take on a little extra work and watch your savings grow. Hang on to your cash instead of spending it on useless items. Innovative gift ideas should be kept well within budget.

Aquarius Don't rely on anyone to do things for you. A change someone makes will be done behind your back. Protect your money, possessions and reputation.

Pisces Certain memories will lead to a sentimental moment. Don't have regrets; learn from your experiences and move forward with a clear head and a good plan. EUGENIA LAST

A look inside the Rockettes' 'Christmas Spectacular'



CARL SCHEFFEL

Alissa LaVergne
ZACK LANE

We spoke with Rockette Alissa LaVergne about one of the holiday season's most wonderful performances.

PAT KING
patrick.king@metro.us

One of New York's longest-running and most cherished traditions is the annual Rockettes "Christmas Spectacular" which makes its home at Radio City Music Hall during the holiday season through Jan. 5. Since 1933, this highly coordinated dance show has dazzled and filled audiences with Christmas cheer, with shows running five times a day, seven days a week. It is as dependable a tradition as there is this time of year and we recently caught up with one of the Rockettes, Alissa LaVergne, to learn more about what goes into the "Christmas Spectacular" every year.

Could you tell us about your history with the Rockettes?
I am currently in my 10th season as a Rockette. I finally hit that mark! I love it. We are in the middle of the shows. We've been in rehearsal since the beginning of October this year. It's been a whirlwind of a year already. The audiences are starting to get packed and the schedule is really starting to rev up. It's pretty exciting.

For those of us who may not know, how much work goes into preparing the Rockettes' "Christmas Spectacular?"
Absolutely! We start rehearsals usually around the end of September [or] the beginning of October and we rehearse six hours a day, six days a week for approximately six weeks before we actually have our first audience. So there is a lot of timing. Because we are known for our precision dance, we have to do all of this work to make 36 women look like one person to put on the 90-minute "Christmas Spectacular." There's a lot of detail and a lot of work that goes into it. While we're in tech [rehearsals], we actually go into about 10-hour days when we start adding elements for costumes, lighting, set-pieces, stagehands and all of the things that go on behind the scenes to make the "Christmas Spectacular" run flawlessly. So once you get into that, it's about a 10-hour day. Then we finally get our first audience after those six weeks of rehearsal. Even once the show is up and running, we still constantly get notes from our dance captains and our directors, that way it's always in tip-top shape to look flawless for each and every performance. There's a lot of dancing and athleticism goes into making sure the "Christmas Spectacular" is top-notch each and every day.

Is there a specific routine that feels special every season once the whole cast finally nails it?
We are always keeping the "Christmas Spectacular" fresh and always adding new elements and stuff like that. Obviously, after 10 years there's always something new and exciting that happens each year. But as far as a step that [feels good when] we nail it, 'The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers' is a really incredible number that each year, has never changed. I've done the show in Nashville, I've done the "Christmas Spectacular" on tour and in New York, and there have always been different elements. But that is one number that has never wavered and never changed. Which is really cool. Every woman who has been a Rockette since 1933 has done it and I think it really epitomizes what we do as precision dance. Because we're making all of these constant formations and really cool illusions and stuff that really enhances what we do as a team of women. That's something that is really special to be a part of.

As someone who has been a member of the Rockettes for 10 years, have you seen the culture around professional dance change with the #MeToo movement? Has there been more of a sense of empowerment?
To be honest, after still being a part of this company and the Rockettes for as long as I have, what I pride myself in so much and the reason why I feel like so many of us do come back and have been around for so long is that we take so much pride in our company and our directors and the people are with us every day. Because it is full of strong independent women. Our directors and our choreographers are all women and are all former Rockettes. I think that's what we all take so much pride in; it's a company and it's a room full of strong powerful independent women. And what better way to prove who we are and our individuality than to be on stage and to be a part of a company that supports that? I feel like each year we just get stronger. The diversity that we have this year as far as having 13 brand new women, we've haven't had that ever! I think I speak for a lot of people for how much we take pride in being a part of a company that supports us so much.

When you think of Christmas in New York, there are a few things that generally come to mind. The Rockettes "Christmas Spectacular" is definitely one of them. Does it still have the same magic for you that it did when you first started with the company?
Absolutely! I'm from a small town in Texas and so I grew up not being able to come to New York to see the Rockettes, but I grew up watching them on the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Every single Thanksgiving my mom would wake us up and we would have coffee and hot cocoa and watch the Rockettes. I'll never forget when I first actually got the call after my second year of auditioning. I got cast in the Nashville company, which was incredible, but I remember all I wanted to do was be a part of the New York company. Just because New York at Christmas time is really unlike anything anyone could ever imagine. Still to this day, I've had a lot of people visit from home who are seeing the show for the first time in New York. I'll see them after the show and they're just in awe. This is something they've always dreamed they could come to. It's very overwhelming hanging out with people and meeting people that experience that for the very first time. It really proves that what we do is important, that we're making memories for these people. To be able to be at Radio City, which is the grandest stage of all, and to be by the Rockefeller Christmas Tree, it feels like living in a movie almost! It never falls by the wayside that this is something that is so special to be a part of.

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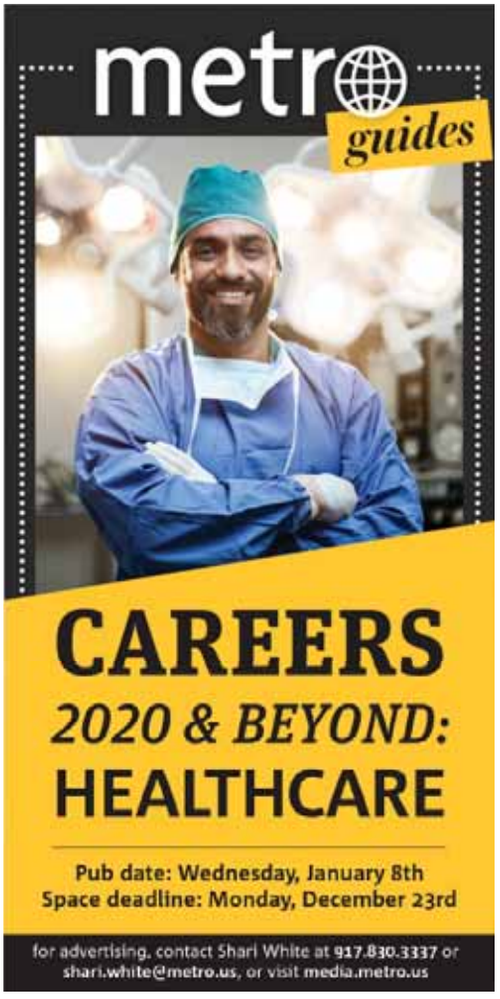
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GETTY IMAGES

Will there be a second season of 'Watchmen?' Here's what Damon Lindelof says

Damon Lindelof's take on "Watchmen," Alan Moore, John Higgins and Dave Gibbons' seminal comic book series from the 1980s, has been adored by critics and audiences alike.

That should mean that a second season of "Watchmen" is inevitable. However, "The Leftovers" and "Lost" co-creator has been very, very cagey about whether or not there will actually be any more episodes.

In fact, speaking to Deadline back in early October ahead of the release of the show, Lindelof said he had no plans to make a second season.

"We designed these nine episodes to be as self-contained as the original 12 issues [of the comics]. We wanted to feel like there was a sense of completeness, to resolve the essential mystery at hand," he explained, before admitting, "Obviously, there is a potential promise for the further exploration of the world but like the seasons of 'Leftovers' that I did as opposed to 'Lost,' which was designed to have cliffhanger finales and a promise of future storytelling.

"Does that mean that there isn't going to be anymore 'Watchmen?' Not necessarily. Does that mean that I will be working on subsequent seasons of 'Watchmen?' I don't know is the answer to that question."

A month later, when Lindelof spoke to Metro.co.uk, he explained exactly why he has been so reserved about discussing a second season of "Watchmen."

"I think there's a fair amount of hubris in planning multiple seasons of a television show in this day and age. Every single idea we had is represented in these nine episodes, there was no time where we were like, 'Let's save that for later.' We wanted the audience to have a complete experience of a story with a beginning middle and end."

But it was at this point that Lindelof gave his first indication that he would be open to returning for a second season of "Watchmen," which takes place 34 years after the events of the comics and Lindelof has described as a remix of the series. Although he suggested that, if he did return, it might take him a while to figure out what he would explore in future episodes.

"If people are like, 'That was a pretty good meal, I'm good,' then there doesn't necessarily need to be anymore. But more importantly, I haven't had any ideas of what subsequent series of 'Watchmen' would be. Until those ideas come, I'm content with just letting this one sit out there for a while."

At the end of November, Lindelof provided a further update of the chances of a second season of "Watchmen" to LAD Bible, insisting, "If the idea is right, and if there is a compelling reason to do it, then I'd consider it. I haven't had that idea yet."

However, it sounds as though, if he did decide to return for a second season, he'd want to discuss what would happen with the original creators of "Watchmen." "The other thing about 'Watchmen' is that it doesn't belong to me," Lindelof added. "Alan Moore, Dave Gibbons and John Higgins created this thing, I had the opportunity to be its steward for a couple of years."

But while Lindelof is still clearly unsure about its future, "Watchmen" director and executive producer Nicole Kassell is much more adamant that there will and should be a second season.

"As a fan who has seen this whole thing, I definitely think there is content for a season two, if not more," she told Business Insider, before tantalizingly teasing, "I think it would be delicious and wonderful to see."

GREGORY WAKEMAN MWN

Booze & Brews WITH BECCA

Becca Glasser-Baker considers herself an adopted New Yorker. Although she studied culinary arts in New Jersey, she credits her passion for cocktails to exploring New York City. When she's not writing, she's probably baking, hanging out with friends, blasting Taylor Swift or petting dogs. When she's not sipping on a cocktail, she's busy indulging in exotic teas. Email her at **Rebecca.glasser@metro.us** with tips, trends, favorite spots and cocktail ideas.

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I spoke to Bushmills Master Distiller, Colum Egan, about why this makes for a perfect holiday gift, and he explained that it has a lot of scotch flavors, so it's a great way to bring a scotch lover into the Irish whiskey category. He also noted this is a great gift since the profile of it is so complex, fruity and smooth. The drink is matured for at least 16 years in a combination of Oloroso sherry and bourbon-seasoned American oak casks. It is also rested for nine months in port wine barrels. ***$149.99, Bushmills.com***

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Eli Manning picked up his 117th, and likely final, win as the starting QB of the New York Giants. GETTY IMAGES

ELI'S ENDING WAS AS GOOD AS IT GETS

PANTORNO'S PERCH

JOE PANTORNO
@JoePantorno

You can count on one hand — with a few fingers to spare — the number of times I've agreed with Pat Shurmur during his tenure as head coach of the New York Giants.

In the final moments of a meaningless game at MetLife Stadium, which had more NFL Draft ramifications than anything else, he got something right.

And it will provide Giants fans with a lasting positive memory amidst one of the darker times in franchise history.

The Giants were well on their way to just their third win of the season, leading the Miami Dolphins 36-20 with 1:50 left when the wily old vet, Eli Manning, took his all-too-familiar trot out on the field to lead the offense.

All he had to do was put the finishing touches on a game that was the perfect embodiment of his 16-year career.

There were some good throws, a circus catch (Golden Tate's 51-yard score), some needless interceptions (he had three on the day). But above all, he found a way to get the job done.

So, it was fitting that Shurmur lifted Manning from the game after one play on the Giants' final drive, allowing him to leave the field to a standing ovation from a fan base that had largely adored him over the past two decades.

Hey, Alex Tanney officially has a claim to fame as the guy who replaced Eli in his final start at MetLife Stadium.

Giants fans have every reason to look toward the future. They're 11-35 since 2017 with Sunday's victory breaking a franchise-record nine-game losing streak. Shurmur is going be shown the door soon and — if ownership is smart — they'll do the same for general manager Dave Gettleman.

We're officially in the Daniel Jones and Saquon Barkley era of Giants football as the blue side of MetLife Stadium will dream of the youthful battery combining forces to return the once-proud franchise to former glory.

They're likely to pick up a big piece to help that cause at the 2020 draft, too, as the rebuild continues.

But Sunday was not about that. Not even in the slightest.

Sunday was about giving the greatest quarterback in franchise history the proper send-off in front of his home fans.

Props to Shurmur for hitting this one out of the park.

It's unclear at this time whether or not Manning will play again in a Giants uniform.

With Jones still nursing an ankle injury, Shurmur didn't write off Manning not playing in Week 16 against the Washington Redskins in Landover, MD on Monday morning.

Jones' injury — suffered in Week 13 — was expected to hold him out between two and four weeks. He's right on schedule as he's close to returning for Sunday's divisional clash of NFC East minnows.

If anything, Manning gets one more run out at FedEx Field while Jones returns for the season finale at home against the Philadelphia Eagles.

But I'd rather see Manning's last plays as a Giant at the Meadowlands in blue, riding off into the sunset to a hero's farewell following a victory.

It's as fitting a conclusion as ever for the Book of Eli.

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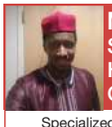

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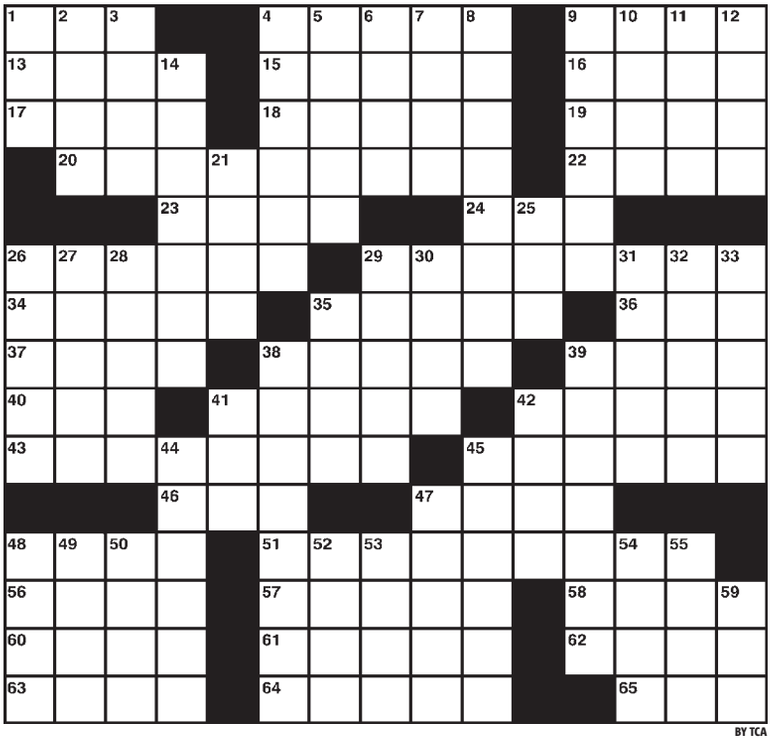

BY TCA

ACROSS

1 Big heart
4 Has none of
9 __ angle; sloping
13 Candied __; sweet side dish
15 Sports venue
16 "All You Need Is __"; Beatles hit
17 Long heroic story
18 Printer cartridge contents
19 Clark Kent's love
20 Objected
22 Cutlass or Alero
23 Cairo's river
24 Debtor's note
26 TV's "Ned and __"
29 Golf course hazard
34 Refers to
35 Tear to bits
36 Not long __; recently
37 Painting, dancing, etc.
38 Con artist's ruses
39 Title for old Russian rulers
40 Luau ring
41 Smacks
42 Liquor
43 Intensify; heighten
45 Raised, as kids
46 High school building
47 Allows
48 Mast
51 Driven; enthusiastic
56 Steel's main component
57 Overdo the role
58 Way out
60 Period before Easter
61 Passenger
62 Run fast
63 Breakfast order
64 Market
65 "Cry __ River"

DOWN

1 Affirmative vote
2 Cartoonist Al __
3 Kuwaiti ruler
4 Recently
5 Ascended
6 Penny
7 Part of the leg
8 Tiny canned fishes
9 Total; full-blown
10 Wrench or saw
11 Eager
12 Loch __ monster
14 Wall candle holders
21 Even scores
25 Peculiar
26 Climb
27 Michelin products
28 Garret
29 In good __; fit
30 Strong-__; forces physically
31 Shaver's need
32 Staring
33 __ over; studied intently
35 "Begone!"
38 Jails
39 Roller __; wild ride
41 Devious
42 Alpha's follower
44 Representatives
45 Venerate
47 British measure
48 Stack
49 "The Beaver State": abbr.
50 Drawn-out
52 Leave out
53 Commotion
54 Reason to study
55 Yahtzee cubes
59 Afternoon social

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V	K	R	E	S	O	P	M	O	C
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Y	C	T	B	A	O	P	E	R	A
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"Dr. Lev is an excellent doctor and I would highly recommend him, I have had excellent results on my veins that I was not able to accomplish with any other doctor. — N.M.

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